

Air tests underway at homes in area - EPA assessing severity of vapor intrusion in section of Riverside.

RIVERSIDE

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RIVERSIDE — The **Environmental Protection Agency** continues to collect air samples from homes in the Avondale community to determine how serious vapor intrusion is for those Riverside residents.

Steve Renninger, on-scene coordinator for the EPA's Region 5 in Cincinnati, said last week that 154 people had signed access agreements, and sampling had been completed at 112 homes.

Of the 112 homes, 60 are below the Ohio Department of Health screening levels, Renninger said. Mitigation systems have been installed at 15 of the remaining 52 homes, and sampling and installation appointments are scheduled out at least through May, he said.

The primary area of concern is bordered by Guernsey Dell Avenue, Minnesota Drive, Hypathia Avenue, Rohrer Boulevard and Valley Pike.

"Each site is different for vapor intrusion," said Renninger, citing crawl space, slab or basement. "We continue to ask folks for access agreements for sampling."

Renninger said the EPA also has expanded its groundwater investigation to the southwest, between North Pleasant Valley Avenue and Prince Albert Boulevard.

"We still have a concern for public health, and we'll continue to work with local and state agencies to review the data," he said.

The sampling and mitigation installation are at no cost to the homeowner. It costs the EPA \$1,000 for the sampling and \$5,000 to install the mitigation system. A mitigation system costs a homeowner about \$75 a year in electric expenses, Renninger has said.

It takes three weeks to get the results back, and once the results are in, the EPA schedules a one-on-one meeting with the homeowner. Depending on the results, an appointment to install the mitigation system is then scheduled. Once the system is installed, the EPA returns in 30 days and 180 days to take more samples.

"I'm concerned about the impact to that neighborhood," Riverside Deputy Mayor Steve Fullenkamp said. "It's a kick in the gut when you hear somebody is polluting the grounds under your home. We encourage the residents to get their homes tested and get them fixed. We want our residents to live in a safe home in terms of air quality."

Residents raised questions and concerns at a public meeting in December, mostly about their health and property values. Another public meeting could be scheduled in late spring or early summer, Renninger said.

Kenneth Emmons and his fiancée, Jessica Rowland, live with his parents at 2620 Bushnell Ave. Emmons said their house was sampled the first week of January, and the screening levels were slightly above the health standards. Emmons and Rowland are expecting a baby girl in late July.

A mitigation system was installed at their home last week, he said.

“After we first heard about it, we were on edge every night,” Emmons said. “The main priority was the baby. Knowing that the numbers are a lot lower, it definitely eases our minds.”

The exact source of the contamination is unclear at this time, Renninger said. He previously said the source likely is located about 800 to 1,000 feet east of Hypathia Avenue and moving southwest, parallel to Valley Pike.

“Right now, our priority is the residential sampling and mitigation,” he said.

Vapor intrusion occurs when underground pollutants give off dangerous gases that can rise up through the soil and seep into buildings through foundation cracks and holes, causing unsafe indoor air pollution, according to the EPA.

The drinking water is not impacted by these site conditions, according to the EPA. The drinking water comes from the city of Dayton’s public water supply.

An investigation started last summer after the EPA conducted groundwater sampling in the area and discovered an above screening level presence of TCE (Trichloroethylene) and PCE (Tetrachloroethylene).

Symptoms of breathing high levels of TCE and PCE include headaches, lung irritation, sleepiness, poor coordination and difficulty concentrating, nausea and in some cases, death.

The EPA has a local office at 2049 Harshman Road that is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekdays. Scheduling for sampling and mitigation installment is done at the office, which can be reached by calling 937-237-7530.